

The President's Daily Brief

June 4, 1976

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Table of Contents

Lebanon: Leftists and Palestinians are clearly intimidated by Syria's latest intervention, and fighting in most areas of the country has dropped sharply. (*Page 1*)

Rhodesia: Continuing government operations against the insurgents have brought a rising number of clashes with small guerrilla bands and higher casualties. (*Page 2*)

Notes: USSR (grain); USSR (exercise); Israel; Peru-Cuba; Bolivia (*Pages 3 and 4*)

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LEBANON: *Leftists and Palestinians are clearly intimidated by Syria's latest intervention although both groups continue to protest Damascus' move. Only a few fedayeen and leftist fighters have confronted Syrian troops in eastern Lebanon, and fighting in most other areas of the country has dropped sharply.*

For the first time, Syrian fighters--possibly supported by Christian elements of the Lebanese air force--flew over Beirut early yesterday at low altitudes. This show of force was intended both to impress leftist dissidents and to upstage a general protest strike in Beirut sponsored by the leftists.

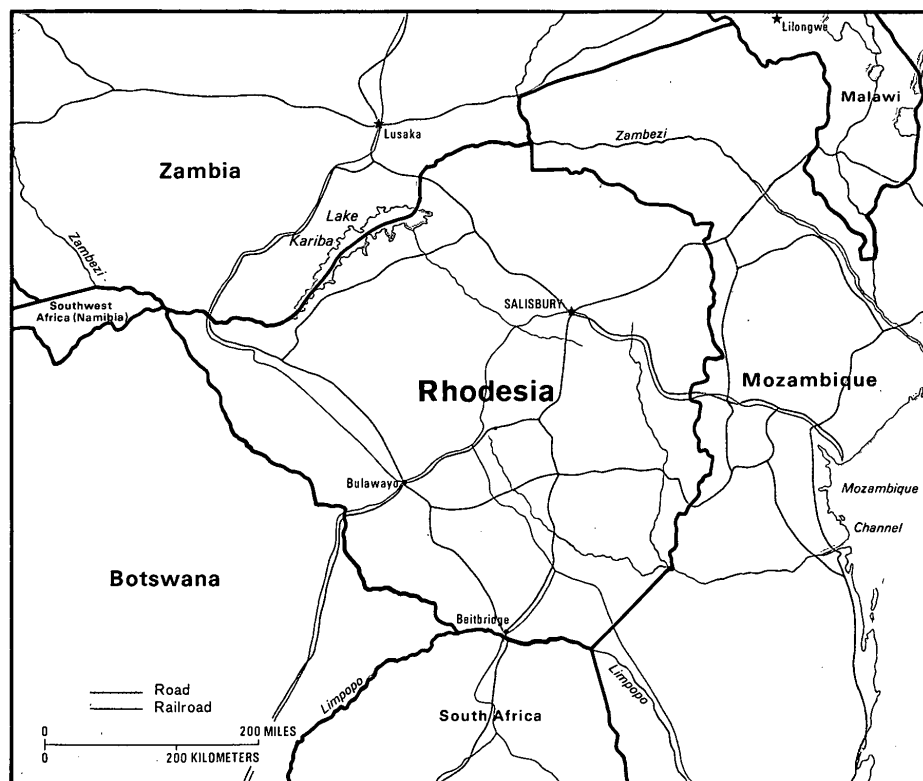
Top officials in Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization are working feverishly to find a realistic way to handle Damascus' challenge. Fatah officials seem to have decided that if further Syrian intervention is to be forestalled, the Lebanese left must now negotiate in earnest.

Apparently at the urging of Fatah officials, leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt submitted a relatively reasonable agenda for political talks to president-elect Ilyas Sarkis during their meeting on Wednesday. Jumblatt still insists on the withdrawal of Syrian troops, but reportedly has dropped his demand for an immediate pullback. Jumblatt's meetings with both Sarkis and Christian Phalange leader Bashir Jumayyil may have laid the groundwork for broader talks among Lebanese leaders that reportedly are scheduled for today.

The initial success of Syria's decision to send new troops into Lebanon will encourage Damascus to press for a formal cease-fire as soon as possible. Most Muslim and Christian leaders seem ready to accept a truce, but no reaction has yet come from two key players--President Franjiyah and Interior Minister Shamun.

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Any delay in establishing a cease-fire will dissipate the sobering effect Syrian actions have had on the warring factions.

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RHODESIA: Continuing government operations against the insurgents are resulting in increasing clashes with small guerrilla bands and higher casualties.

According to the government, 104 guerrillas and 23 members of the Rhodesian security forces were killed last month.

The security forces have established three separate operational zones along the northern, central, and southern sectors of Rhodesia's border with Mozambique, where the main rebel bases are located. The insurgents, however, are still operating over wide areas and stretching the government's resources.

As the fighting picks up, the number of Rhodesian whites opting for emigration is rising. The white population decreased in April by more than 800--by far the highest monthly decrease since 1965. As a result, Rhodesian authorities reportedly are stalling on issuing credentials needed by persons planning to leave for South Africa.

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NOTES

Soviet planners are relying on a record sowing of spring grains--around 250 million acres--to offset winter grain losses.

Winter grain production, which normally accounts for about 30 percent of total grain output, is now projected at 45 million tons at most. This would be 4 million tons less than the winter harvest last year and 18 million tons less than the record winter crop of 1973. Weather conditions for the remainder of this crop season--especially during June and July--will be decisive in determining the size of this year's total grain harvest.

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Soviet

The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron^{25X1} is at a higher than normal level because of the arrival of ships and submarines that are intended to relieve other vessels that have been in the Mediterranean for some time. In the past, the Soviets have used such a period as an opportunity to conduct a naval exercise.

The Squadron now has about 70 ships and submarines of all types in the Mediterranean. The number is expected to stabilize at about 55, the normal number in the Squadron.

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Israelis

Possibly violent confrontations with Israeli security forces are likely if the Arabs follow through with their plans. The Israelis had arrested a number of West Bank Arabs this week in an effort to head off the demonstrations, but the arrests only added to existing tensions among the Arab population.

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Peru, like several other Latin American countries, recently has been downplaying its official ties with Cuba.

President Morales Bermudez believes that this will help Peru to improve its standing with other South American governments. The Peruvians have been careful, however, to reassure Havana that they want to maintain amicable relations.

Morales Bermudez has shown concern over unsubstantiated reports of large numbers of Cuban military personnel arriving in Peru. 25X1

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Aside from a military attache, there are no known Cuban military personnel there.

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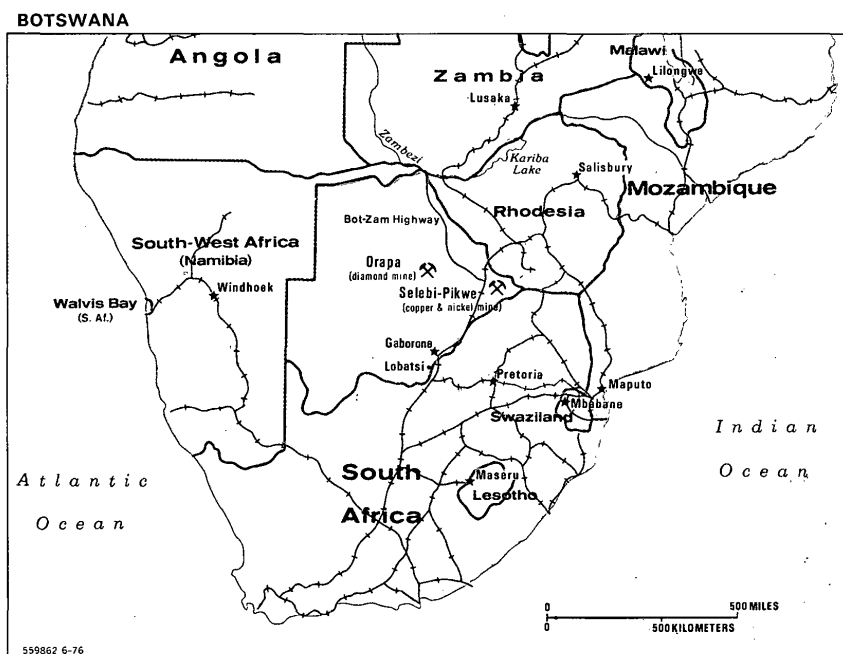
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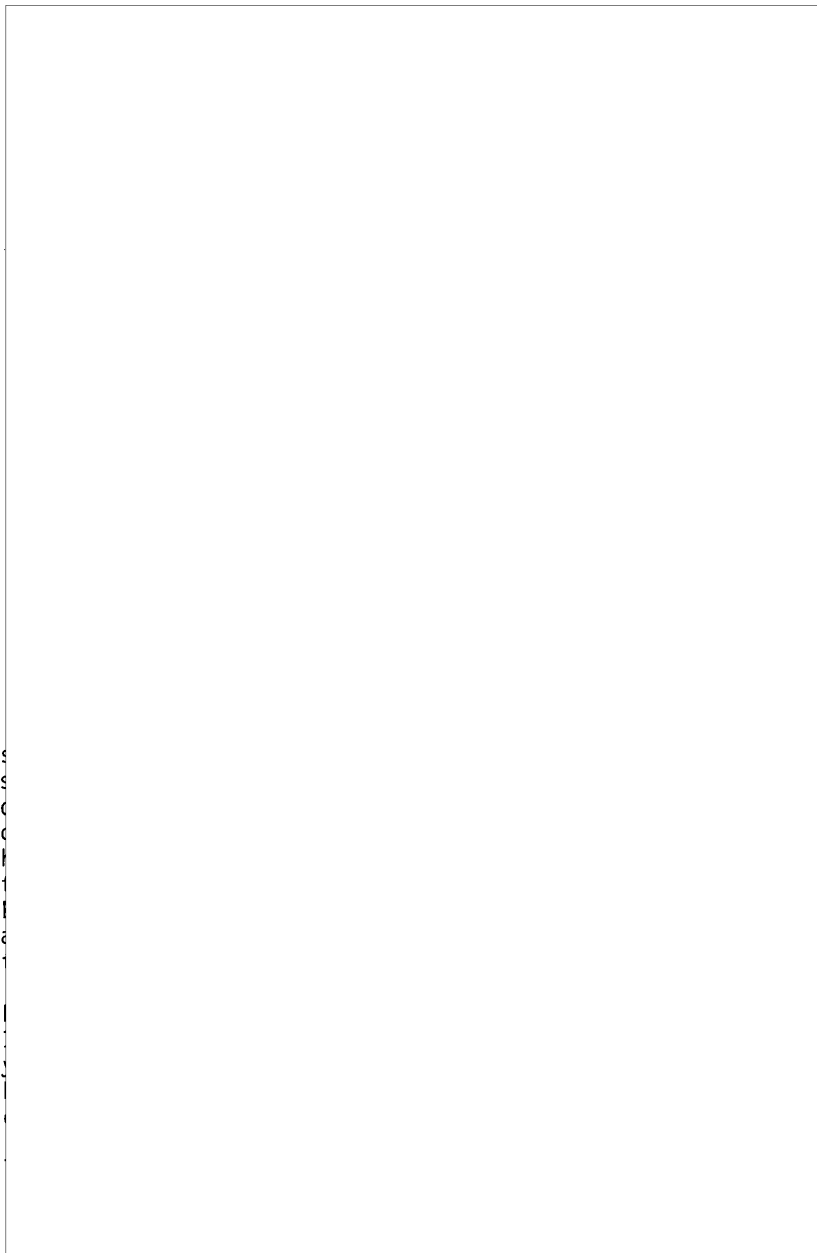
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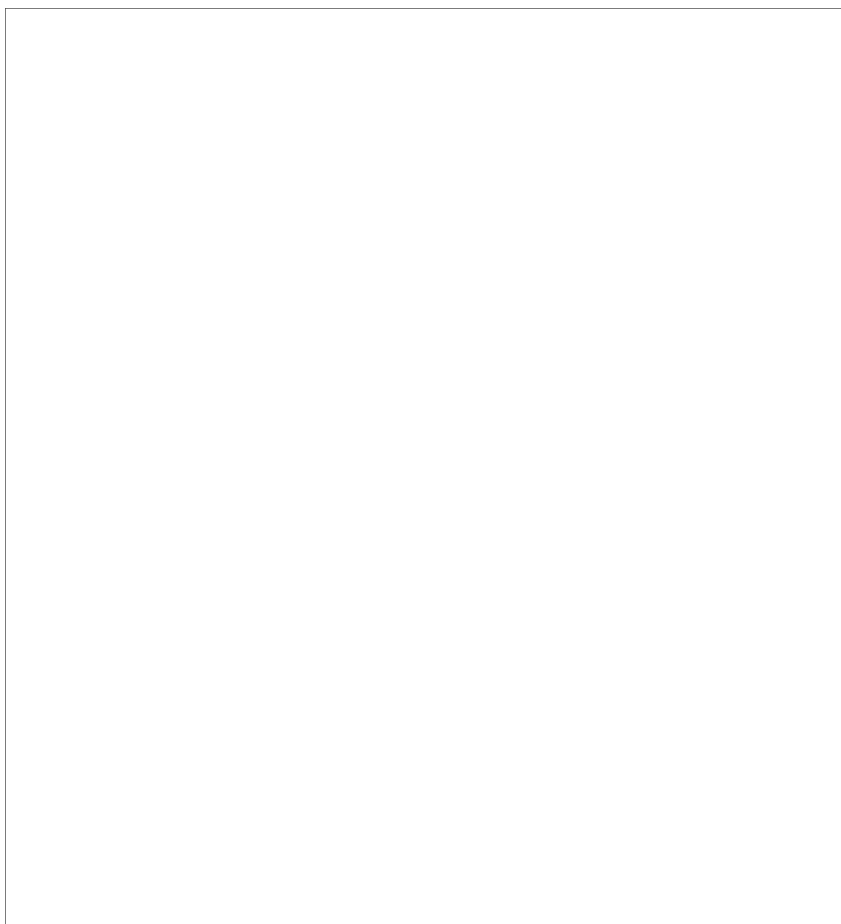
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